

INTRO

Stephanie Jackson: Now That's INTAresting. This podcast is about the Georgia Tech Sam Nunn School of International Affairs, its graduates, their careers, and how the Nunn School has helped to shape their future. Take a listen.

SJ: I'm Stephanie Jackson and this, we're continuing our series on minors with this podcast and more specifically about how adding a minor offered by the Sam Nunn School of International Affairs adds a global perspective to undergraduate degrees and helps to shape career path. So today who would like to welcome our guest, Maggie Kellett. Maggie is an alum of the Scheller College of Business at Georgia Tech and she received a Bachelor of Science in Business Administration. Maggie also graduated with a Minor in International Affairs from the Sam Nunn School of International Affairs. So, while the Georgia Tech, Maggie was an Indirect Purchasing Intern for Rolls Royce, a Study Abroad Student Assistant at Georgia Tech as well as part of the President's Scholars Program, the Honors Program, and the International Plan. After graduating from Georgia Tech, Maggie work as a Senior Marketing Analyst at Arby's Restaurant Group, and now she works with CNN as a Research Analyst. So, thank you for joining us today, Maggie. We are glad to have you here and I appreciate you taking the time to share more about your career path.

Maggie Kellett: Yeah, of course. Thanks for having me.

SJ: Certainly. I would, I would like to begin with getting to, you should tell us a bit about your thought process as an undergraduate student. So, you were studying business. So, what led you to pursue a Minor in International Affairs?

MK: So, actually when I entered Georgia Tech, I originally entered as an engineering major. And so my freshman year I knew I wanted to minor in something that was a non-engineering related field to sort of balance what I thought was going to be my degree and balance the classes I was taking and I've always been interested in International Affairs. I had done a study abroad in high school, I was very passionate about doing that again in college. And so, I thought an INTA Minor would add a nice perspective. It's kind of the perfect minor in that it goes with pretty much any degree. So, so, even if I were to decide to change my major later, I knew an INTA Minor would always be a good idea. And so, my first semester, I took the international, the Intro to International Relations class, and ended up absolutely falling in love with it. And I'm pretty sure I like did all the paperwork to declare my minor the following semester.

SJ: Oh, great, great, that's great that you're, you were able to get in the course during first semester as well and able to see how it influenced your choices in your courses. So, tell us, also, in your resume it looks like you also worked with the Office of International Education.

MK: I did. Um, I think that was starting like my second semester in Georgia Tech. They had an opening for a Student Assistant and like I said, study abroad was something that I had been very passionate about going into college. So, I applied and ended up getting the job. And it was very cool because I got to see all of the behind the scenes work with when studying abroad, and I got to work with the great advisors there and help them plan things and do paperwork and even got communicate with other universities sometimes. And then I also, as part of that, got to help a little bit on the international

student and working the front desk and stuff, so I got to interact with our students, our international students at Georgia Tech.

SJ: Okay, so as a, as being able to see, like you said, the backside of how International Education works, did that influence also help to influence your decision to study abroad at all?

MK: Absolutely. I mean, I, I knew I wanted to do it going in, but just being around those programs and being with advisors who were so encouraging and so helpful about helping me find what program I wanted and what was going to be right for me and kind of getting to know a lot of the ins and outs of the different programs really helped my decision. And it also allowed me to help other students who were interested in studying abroad, not only with helping with events, but also just like my friends. Like I'm pretty sure I did the paperwork for like two of my closest friends when they were doing their study abroad.

SJ: Right, right. And where did you go for study abroad?

MK: I went to GTL in Metz, France.

SJ: Oh, great.

MK: So, I did a spring semester at GT Lorraine.

SJ: And how was that experience?

MK: It was great. It was very daunting. I had taken two, I think two semesters of French before I went over there, and I was taking another French class while I was there. But I did not speak fluent French by any means. So, it was daunting to really be kind of on my own to a certain extent in another country because with Georgia Tech Lorraine, while all of my classes were in English and all of the professors were Georgia Tech professors or guest professors, I still had so much free time, and I had control over my own travel schedule, which was great. But also, I definitely had to learn a lot of new skills in order to be able to plan my travel accordingly and make sure I got to class on time.

SJ: Right. So, you spent the spring semester there. And I imagine you were able to travel throughout Europe, not just within France. Right.

MK: Yeah, I think I did London. I did like a week in Italy. I went to Zurich. I visited some family friends in Geneva. So, I got to get a little taste of everything.

SJ: So, also while you were a student, I understand you did the International Plan.

MK: I ended up not being able to complete the International Plan because I did change majors, so it threw off some of my careful planning at the beginning. So, I wasn't able to do a second study abroad.

SJ: Okay.

MK: But I did all of the coursework for it, including language requirements. It's a very cool program, I think. And it was something that kind of attracted me to Georgia Tech in the first place. Because I think if you go in knowing that you want an international focus or you want a global experience, even if it can be a tough program to complete, I think it's so good to try because the course requirements make you learn new things, and they make you take courses that you didn't plan on taking. I did not plan to study a second language in college, and I ended up doing it. And I'm so glad I did. So, I think it's, I think it's a

good experience, and I would encourage anybody who's interested in an International Affairs Minor to also look at the International Plan because there is a lot of overlap coursework.

SJ: So, you said a couple of things. One of them was that you came in as one major and ended up wanting to balance your courses, and took some additional courses which led you to add the minor, but what led you to switch over to Business?

MK: Well, originally, I was an Aerospace Engineering student, because I liked math. And then I realized after a couple of years, that I liked math, but maybe just not quite that much. And so, when I was thinking about what major I wanted to switch to, I knew I wanted to go with non-engineering, and then I also was working on my INTA Minor. So, I was like, well what also is going to go really well with this minor? And, Business seemed like a great choice. It was very broad. I ended up going with the Marketing Concentration, but it allowed me to have kind of an analytical focus but not be so in the weeds on just like pure mathematics.

SJ: Okay. And so, in pursuing the Business degree and the International Affairs Minor, did you see linkages between the two disciplines?

MK: Oh, absolutely. I, I mean everything now is so interconnected, especially in the business world. So, having classes that were teaching me to think at a global level with my minor gave me a perspective and skills that could take into courses for my major, and vice versa to some extent. It was really fun to be able to be, you know, talking about a case study with my classmates in a marketing class and then be able to reference something that we had talked about in an INTA class because it was pertinent to what was happening to the case study. And it just gave me more perspective, and it allowed me to sort of connect the dots in ways that maybe people who weren't also taking INTA classes weren't able to do.

SJ: Right, right. And so, from these experiences, you moved into working with Arby's? Okay. Tell us about that. And how, was there any international aspects to any of that work or did you find that any of the classwork or the coursework that you took in International Affairs was something that you utilized in that work?

MK: Yeah, so there wasn't really a direct international component with my work at Arby's. But, a lot of the skills that I picked up in my International Affairs classes transferred because so much of those classes are you're reading material or you're writing a paper or you're coming up with a presentation where you have to convince people of your idea. You're pitching an idea or a concept or saying this is what I think will happen or this is why I think X, Y or Z happened, and then you have to be able to support your argument with data basically, and points, and history, and the reading. And that was a lot of my job at Arby's. And it's a lot of my job at CNN too, where I'm looking at data and then I have to tell a story, and I have to convince people of my conclusions. So, knowing how to look at something and say, okay, this is what I think it is, and this is why I think it is, in a concise and clear manner was very helpful. And then, there's also a component to International Affairs and International Relations where there's not necessarily a right answer—there's just better and worse answers. There's kind of this nebulous gray area, which I find really interesting. And that's very much the case in like marketing or what I currently do, with like estimating where you, you're kind of, you're taking your best guess based on what you know, what you've studied, and what you've researched.

SJ: Okay. So, tell us, let's get into a little bit more detail about your current role. So, you're a Research Analyst. Tell us what that, what that means at CNN.

MK: So, my role mostly centers around rating analysis and estimation for linear television, which is anything that has touched like a traditional TV screen and then also video on demand in order to help make programming and scheduling decisions. I work a lot with original series and films. So, anytime there's a new original series, I get to go in and analyze it and, you know, present to people how it performed and were there things that I think we could improve, are there things that maybe we would want to think about or consider the next time we aired that show. And then, also answering questions from our scheduling team about you know, should something air at before after a certain program or at a certain time slot.

SJ: So, how did, how does your work at CNN differ in any way from some of the other, the job you had at Arby's or any of your internships previously?

MK: It's definitely the most fast-paced job I've ever worked. The news cycle is very, very fast.

SJ: Yeah.

MK: So, it's never boring. And then, I think to a certain extent, there's just more factors. So, part of my job is estimating what we think future ratings are going to be. And so much of that is what's going on, not only in the US but also abroad, and then saying how we think that might affect the television landscape and how that might affect CNN in the future, and do we think it's gonna have a positive or negative impact on our ratings? So, the scope is definitely broader than any of my previous jobs, and the pace is definitely faster.

SJ: Right, right. So, when did you pursue, I guess, an opportunity at CNN? What drew you to, to working there?

MK: Well, I had gotten to a point in my career at Arby's where I felt a little stagnant. I felt like I wasn't really learning a ton of new stuff.

SJ: Yeah.

MK: And I've always had an affinity for Warner Media. I mean it, there's a campus right next to the Georgia Tech campus.

SJ: Right.

MK: And I was looking to see what positions were open there, and there was the CNN Research Analyst role. And when I was reading the description, I was like, well, that sounds exciting. And I thought it would be a challenge and it would be something that would allow me to use skills that maybe I wasn't using as much at Arby's. And so, I ended up applying and after interviewing with the team, I was like this is, this is a good fit.

SJ: Good. So, in reflecting on the international experiences that you have had, studying abroad and working in the Office of International Education or having the international minor and completing parts of the International Plan, how do you think having all of those international perspectives have affected your career path?

MK: I think that one, they've given me the ability to look at things from a lot of different angles, and potentially angles outside of my own experience. I think they've also allowed me to just connect with people better. Whether or not that someone I'm meeting in or outside of work, I think having just more experiences, broader experiences, more global experiences, really does help you connect with people better. And I think it's just, it's given me a lot of skills, especially like softer skills that I think are sometimes difficult to develop if you're not consciously making an effort of it. So, having gotten those, through my experiences, working in the Office of International Education and Minor in International Affairs and studying abroad, all of those I think taught me skills that I, would have been difficult to learn in other ways.

SJ: So, thinking back, if you were to address some students who might be thinking about studying abroad, what advice would you give them?

MK: Research everything. And really think about the type of experience you're working or you're looking for. There are so many different types of programs that have different degrees of freedom and sort of do it yourself as far as your planning goes that can offer a deep dive into one location or offer you a chance to see multiple different places. And then, also to just don't let fear hold you back from doing it. Because it can be really daunting, especially if you're doing something like an exchange program where it's maybe just you and you're going over to an entirely different university. That it's, you know, it's gonna be hard sometimes and like sometimes like yeah, you will get homesick, especially if you're gone for like a full semester or a full year, but it's so worth it. And you learn so much, and it's such a good challenge to put yourself through.

SJ: Right, right. Similarly, for students who are thinking of pursuing a Minor in International Affairs or just, you know, in a subject that is different from their major, what advice would you give them?

MK: Number one, do it. I think it is so valuable, especially just whether it's International Affairs or something that's just different your major, I think exploring something different from your major it could, help you, I think it helps you do better in your major classes because you don't feel burnt out or bogged down. It gives you a break. It gives you different way of thinking, a different perspective. You get to interact with different types of students. And then also, just especially in your freshman and sophomore year when you're working on filling up like your electives and your free electives, just take stuff that sounds interesting. If you see a course title or a course name just, even if you're not sure, that like that is going to be your future minor, just take the course. Because you never know, you might just fall in love with it.

SJ: It's so interesting. I think that since you graduated, you mentioned that you started as an Aerospace Engineering student, International Affairs now offers courses in Space Policy that have, you know, that have drawn interest from Aerospace Engineers and other students who are interested in military and other things like that. So, I think that the notion that International Affairs is broad is very important and that there's ways to incorporate other disciplines into an interest in International Affairs.

MK: Absolutely. And that's so cool. I wish that class had been there when I was at Tech.

SJ: Yeah, and you know, I think, the Nunn School has been determined to try to outreach to a lot of the other disciplines and majors on campus to help them and to, you know, provide them a way to grow

their global competency in their programs. And that's just one option, one example that I thought of since you mentioned Aerospace as your first, as your initial major.

MK: Yeah, I did find in my International Affairs classes, I had classes with a wider variety of other majors. I felt like it was the most like cross-college experience and collaboration I think I got.

SJ: Okay, that's good to know. That's great to know. Okay. Well, thank you for your time today, Maggie.

MK: Yeah, of course.

SJ: It's been a great pleasure to speak with you and to hear about your journey and how International Affairs and your international experiences have shaped your skills and your career path. And we want to wish you the best in your future and we look forward to what else you might do next.

MK: Thank you.

OUTRO

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